

November 30 , 2007



Planning Department Newsletter



COMMISSION RECOMMENDS ACTION ON DOWNTOWN PARKING

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At its meeting of October 30, the City Council addressed a 2007 adopted goal to consider retaining a consultant for development of a downtown plan. During its discussion of this goal, the Council did not direct that a consultant be hired for this purpose, but it did request that the Planning Commission provide a recommendation on the subject of parking for downtown residential uses. As noted in previous Planning Department Newsletter articles, this

is a matter that the Commission has been studying since February of this year. This study was prompted primarily by Pioneer Hill residents concerned about the prospect of large mixed use developments in the central business district placing parking pressures on adjacent residential neighborhoods. Currently, there is no requirement in the zoning code for downtown land uses to provide off-street parking.

In accordance with the Council's

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Commission members discussed parking in relation to the commercial storefront character of the downtown.

request, the Planning Commission met to consider this topic on November 28. At that time, planning staff presented the results of a recent survey it conducted with a dozen stakeholders, including residents of neighborhoods adjacent to the central business district, downtown merchants, and real estate developers. Staff explained that all survey respondents stated there is a current or potential future problem with parking downtown, but their proposed solutions varied depending on the type of respondent. Generally speaking, neighborhood residents called for the imposition of an off-street parking requirement for residential uses (ranging from one parking space per dwelling to one parking space per bedroom), downtown merchants requested better enforcement of existing parking regulations, and developers asked for a coordinated effort to establish more public and private parking facilities in the downtown district.

During its deliberations at the meeting, the Commission raised several issues. Members expressed interest in enhanced parking enforcement, better identification of available parking lots, and a permit parking system for

downtown residents. Commissioners also discussed the benefits of revisiting the long-term vision for the downtown at some point in the future. A couple members stated their preference for some sort of off-street parking requirement for downtown residential uses, but several others voiced concern about imposing such a requirement without design standards to control the interruption of commercial storefronts with parking facilities. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commission reached consensus on the following recommendations:

1. Provide better code enforcement of existing downtown parking regulations.
2. More clearly identify parking opportunities downtown.
3. Explore permit parking for downtown residents in central business district parking lots.
4. If parking is required for downtown residential uses, then design standards for that parking should be developed.

The City Council is scheduled to discuss these recommendations at its meeting of December 4.

COUNCIL APPROVES REVISIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

On November 6, the City Council took action to revise local laws pertaining to critical areas and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The “critical areas ordinance” (CAO) is required of each jurisdiction by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). The purpose of the CAO is to protect environmental resources and enhance public safety. “Critical areas” are wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, aquifer recharge areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas. Resource lands (involving agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands) are also addressed in these regulations. Pullman's first CAO was adopted in 1992. The regulations were then significantly revised by the City Council in 2003.

The GMA mandates that CAOs be updated periodically to apply best available science to the

protection of these sensitive areas. The schedule set forth in the GMA calls for the city of Pullman to review and, if necessary, revise its CAO by December 1, 2007.

In order to meet this schedule, planning department staff initiated the CAO review process back in August of 2006. With the aid of a \$13,200 grant from the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), planning staff conducted pertinent research, solicited public input, and drafted several ordinance revisions that were first reviewed by the Council on June 13. The draft language was altered based on Council direction and transmitted to CTED to meet the terms of the grant agreement and to request the agency’s “60-day review” as mandated by state law. In September, CTED responded that the proposed

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revisions reflected “very good work,” and the amendments were acceptable as written.

The basic CAO changes adopted by the Council were as follows:

- provides for appeals to the Hearing Examiner of final decisions regarding critical area reports for individual projects
- authorizes the issuance of official interpretations of the ordinance’s provisions
- demands that aquifer recharge areas be subject to the critical area report requirements
- updates references to publications and codes

Given that the newly revised appeals section of the CAO refers to the city’s SEPA regulations for processing appeals related to critical areas, staff proposed the necessary changes to the city’s SEPA rules. Staff also took the opportunity to draft additional revisions to these rules for the Council’s consideration. (For the uninitiated, the State Environmental Policy Act is a comprehensive law administered by state and local agencies that requires review of a broad spectrum of probable environmental impacts associated with proposed projects or programs.)

The basic SEPA ordinance amendments adopted by the Council on November 6 were as follows:

- modifies the appeals section to account for the administration of CAO appeals
- confirms that the preliminary threshold determination (Determination of Nonsignificance, Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance, or Determination of Significance) is the decision for which public notification is provided (so public notice of final threshold determinations will no longer be furnished)
- transfers the responsibility of hearing appeals on conditioned or denied SEPA proposals from the City Council to the Hearing Examiner
- alters when the filing fee may be refunded for a withdrawn appeal from the time the responsible official responds to the Hearing Examiner to 30 days after the filing of the appeal
- adds language to clarify the contents of the Hearing Examiner’s record of decision in an appeal
- establishes a 90-day deadline for initiating an appeal hearing, as opposed to the former language stating that a hearing must be “expeditiously scheduled”



To learn more about these CAO or SEPA revisions, please contact a member of the planning department staff. We will be happy to assist you with any questions.

The city’s environmental regulations help protect our local natural resources.



Pending Land Use Applications

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

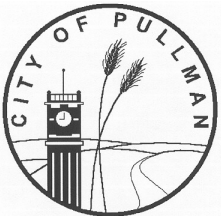
PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Zoning Code Text Amendment	code revision to allow radio and TV studios in C1 district	citywide	PC initiated case on 11/28; possible PC hearing in January
Hinrichs Annexation	annex 37 acres to the city	west of Sunnyside Park and north of SW Old Wawawai Road	staff reviewing legal description of property
Askins Annexation	annex 35 acres to the city	Johnson Road south of the Village Centre Cinemas	CC accepted annexation on 4/3; city awaiting petition from applicant
Radio Palouse Wawawai Road Rezone (Z-07-2)	change prezone of 9,000-sq-ft parcel from R2 to C1	west of Sunnyside Park and north of Old Wawawai Road	PC initiated case on 11/28; possible PC hearing in January
Bryant House Special Valuation	request for special property tax valuation for single family house rehabilitation	1005 NE Maple Street	LC authorized execution of agreement on 11/28; final meeting to be scheduled for December
LDS Church Conditional Use Permit (C-07-8)	construct 16,600-sq-ft church and parking lot on 4-acre parcel	520 NW Park View Drive	staff reviewing application; possible BOA hearing in January
Appeal of Wal-Mart Supercenter SEPA determination and site plan	develop 223,000-sq-ft store on a 28-acre site	south of SE Harvest Drive/ Bishop Boulevard intersection	Superior Court judge denied PARD appeal on 10/18/06; PARD filed appeal with Court of Appeals on 11/27/06
Appeal of Animal Haven SEPA determination	develop 12,000-sq-ft animal shelter on 6.2-acre site	1350 SE Old Moscow Road	staff reviewing appeal documentation
Crimson Village site plan (07-2)	develop mixed-use retail/residential buildings totaling 66,000 sq ft on 10.5-acre lot	1000 block of SE Bishop Boulevard	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Tomason Place Apartments site plan (07-11)	establish 26-unit apartment building on 82,600-sq-ft parcel	555 NE Terre View Drive	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Hospital Parking Lot Addition site plan (07-15)	established 37-stall parking lot	835 SE Bishop Boulevard	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Paradise Lofts site plan (07-17)	develop 9 dwellings atop commercial space on 5,400-sq-ft lot	435 SE Paradise Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Water Tank No. 10 site plan (07-20)	install city water tank and control house on 33,500-sq-ft parcel	south of 1700 block of SW Casey Court	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
High School Storage Building site plan (07-21)	construct 840-sq-ft storage building at high school	510 NW Larry Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS: R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; DOE: State Department of Ecology; LC: Landmarks Commission

NOTES: 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list.. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.





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